264 "When we work in the fields we eat five times daily: as soon as we reach the place we have a light lunch *(zakuska)*, at nine we have the *ruchok*, at one dinner, at five another *zakuska*, and in the evening after finishing work we have supper. We older people don't eat between meals but let the children do so if they are hungry."

262 252 From time to time during my stay in the village I tried to teach the tavern cook some simple and uncomplicated western dish to vary the biting peasant food. She tried faithfully but unsuccessfully to comply. After one such hopeless but courteous attempt she read me a little lesson in village menus:

"We Dragalevtsy people are pretty conservative in everything and have added no new dishes to our menu. The western combinations which people eat in Sofia are tasteless and slimy. If one doesn't use lots of salt, hot pepper, and vinegar, then the food has no taste at all."

273 Beverages other than milk and wine made little appeal. Wine was much in evidence on holidays or when there were guests. An average village home would use from 250 to 300 quarts of wine a year. Most of the *rakiya* was drunk either at the taverns or on festive occasions. In commenting on the liquor consumption of the village one man said:

"We are not such fools as not to drink wine, for the wine is transformed into blood and gives strength to man."

000 Someone has said that a house does not become a home until it knows a birth, a wedding, and a death. In other words, it is more than plaster walls, crude furniture, and steaming food. It is even more an association of memories deeply rooted in family crises.

844 [591] A frequently recurring crisis in Dragalevtsy was childbirth, which always took place in a home, never in a hospital. Usually it was the home in which the couple lived, for only rarely did the wife return to her paternal home for the event. When a woman learned that she was pregnant, she told the fact only to her own mother and to her husband, embarrassment preventing further disclosure. The mother-in-law learned about it a month later, for in the words of one of the older village men:

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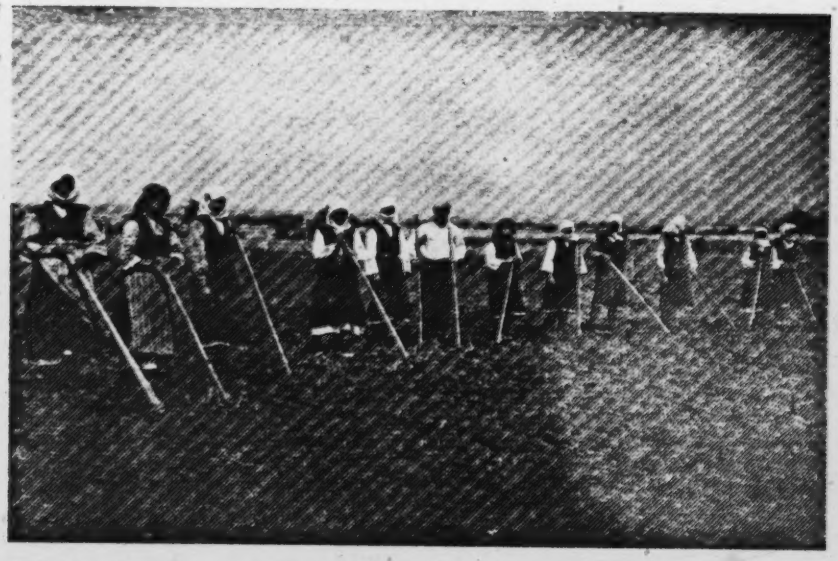

"The cornhoeing groups . . . also afforded an opportunity for visiting and conversation." *See page 46.*

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"The patriarchal system . . . won out" (a father and three married sons living together in a one-room house). *See page 62.*

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veniently arranged to be away from home. The villagers occasionally joked about the peasant who climbed a tree to escape the tax collector and had to remain in that uncomfortable predicament for many hours before the visitor left. But the Turks did recognize the traditional form of village government, or government by elders, and let the heads of the zadrugas, or large joint families, run village affairs to their liking. Most of the time, the head of the zadruga had to accept the responsibility for the deeds of all members of his family group.

These zadrugas were little principalities guided by a *stopanin,* usually the oldest male. His word was law; he distributed the work among the men, bought the necessities, sold the produce, and represented the zadruga before the outside world; therefore, the zadruga usually bore his name. Whenever a son, brother, or nephew of the *stopanin* married, he brought his wife back home to become a member of his zadruga. The wife of the *stopanin,* known as the *domakinya,* managed the housework. She kept the women busy making bread, cooking, washing, spinning, and weaving. Everything was owned in common. Work too was done in common, and whatever one earned outside was turned over to the *stopanin* for the common treasury. In return, all the members got clothes and food, which in those days were about all they expected to have.

After the death of the *stopanin,* the members met to select the next most capable male as their leader. At times, the *domakinya* took over the position of responsibility. Such was doubtless what happened in the case of Baba Dragana, or her prototype, since the ending of the word Dragalevtsy would indicate that it had been settled by a zadruga. The old joint family comprised married cousins descended from the same ancestor, with the result that it sometimes numbered as many as one hundred people.

When the older Dragalevtsy peasants talked to me of the zadruga, which persisted as late as 1880 in their village, they showed that wistfulness for the past which runs through the works of many Bulgarian writers. The zadruga was supposed to be a source of plenty and happiness to its members. One aged peasant listed for me the advantages of this joint family over the modern family. First of all, he said, it had great economy. The members had only one lamp,

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With women it was quite different, since marriage for them called for major adjustments. Not only did the wife have to become accustomed to the demands and habits of her husband, but she also had to fit into the routine of her husband's parental home. In some cases she had to subordinate herself to other daughters-in-law in the household. Should she and her husband live in a separate dwelling near the husband's childhood homestead, she still was so subject to the scrutiny of the in-laws that she found it expedient to conform to their ways of doing things.

The woman, much more than the man, had to give up the companionship of her former friends to move in the group of the married women of the neighborhood. In these groups she was initiated into much of the folklore about anatomy, conception, childbirth, and child care. The frank discussion by various women of their personal experiences was enough to make any squeamish girl terrified at the very thought of becoming a mother. Continued discussion, however, made the experience eventually seem less of an ordeal; in fact, it was often a source of comfort and encouragement when her time arrived.

These neighborhood gossiping groups did much more than shock the girl into some of the realities of married life; they also informed her of the personal peculiarities of her in-laws and neighbors; they let her know what she should and should not do. And if she was one of the first of her circle of friends to marry, she could look forward to the day when one or two of them would become brides in the vicinity and could join her in the company of these older married women.

The role of these women's groups in the village was interesting and far more important than the surface informality would indicate. Recreation for the older women was generally tied up with work. Distinctions, however, should be made between the women's work groups, such as those for spinning and carding, and women's gossiping groups, in spite of the fact that the membership was the same in both groups and that gossiping was the chief recreation in both instances. In the work groups, the women were invited formally by the hostess, were fed, and were expected to stay most of the day, definitely to work. Gossiping groups, however, were much more informal, since people

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kissing his hand and toasting him before drinking *rakiya* at ceremonial 593
dinners. The newer patterns, such as little children giving a goodnight kiss, which had penetrated a few of the homes, centered around the mother.

For instance, in a family where three married sons dwelt in the same room with their parents and three unmarried brothers, one of the married sons said: "Our little children sometimes kiss the hands of the grown-ups before going to bed, and we married sons always kiss our parents' hands before drinking *rakiya* at home. We never quarrel with our father; if we are dissatisfied, we do not dare raise our voices." The married sons are thirty-six, twenty-seven, and twenty-five years old.

But sometimes the tables were turned. There was another case of a sixty-eight year old father who had entrusted the management of the estate to his thirty-four year old son. He had to consult his son before spending any money or doing anything around the place. The household still respected him in many ways though not leaving him much authority. He took comfort in at least one thing: "I am always the one to begin the meal, and all wait for me to begin before they start to eat."

One home which I studied made a great deal out of forms and ceremonies and was one of the best regulated and happiest homes I found. The children were doing excellently at school, and I came upon them studying their lessons even in the pasture while tending the sheep, a most extraordinary thing. The mother had been orphaned at an early age, appreciated a mother's role, and took her task seriously; the father likewise considered his parenthood as a real obligation and was ambitious for his children. When the children got up in the morning they put on their shoes, ran to the street fountain to wash, returned to say their prayers and then to kiss the hands of the elders, the youngest son kissing the hands of his older brothers (aged thirteen and twelve). Every day the mother reminded them: "Today you will be good."

When daughters married, they never returned to live at home 591
except under the most unusual circumstances. If the father was without a housekeeper, he might ask his married daughter, accompanied

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591 by her husband, to come and live with him. Most married daughters
594 liked to visit in their parental homes on Sundays and other holidays, with their children and their husbands. While the frequency of visitation naturally varied with the daughters' sociability, it was significant that the daughters of wealthy peasants returned more often for visits than the daughters of poor peasants. There might have been an economic as well as a filial motive involved in this visitation. Married daughters still living in Dra'galevtsy frequently called on their mothers, and helped them through difficult times. In more than half of the homes the married daughter-mother bond was kept intact, a source of comfort to both parties.

593 Married sons living with their parents were far more considerate of them than sons who had separated and lived in houses of their own. While in the paternal home they were subject to the authority of the old people, especially to that of the father. Sons living separately had no reason to obey the father if, as was usual in such cases, the property had already been divided. Though he might go to his father for advice, he was just as apt to seek the advice of tavern cronies. Of course, there were many variations of this situation. One thirty-eight year old son, married but not living in the paternal home, consulted his father about everything of importance—buying land, selling animals, building a house.

In another case, where the youngest son and his family lived in the paternal home with the widowed mother, the son got along extremely well with the mother. For instance, when she slapped him resoundingly because he had gone to the drink-shop, he simply smiled and said: "All right, you have the right to do that." He consulted his mother about many things, saw to it that she did not do heavy work and that she had an honorable place in the household.

In one household the twenty-six year old son spent little time at home because of his job as the *Obshtina* courier. He and his father experienced considerable conflict because he did not hand over his earnings to the old man but spent them on his own needs. At the same time he was living and eating free of charge in his father's house, much to the satisfaction of his mother who championed him before her husband. Naturally the son was dissatisfied with staying at home,

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591 562 If a daughter failed to marry, she spent the rest of her life in her father's home and received sympathy only as long as her mother was alive. Her father and married brothers thought of her as a servant in the home and treated her accordingly. Fortunately there was rarely more than one old maid at a time in Dragalevtsy.

593 855 562 The treatment of younger children, of course, varied greatly with the home. Children in Dragalevtsy were accustomed to being yelled at from their first toddling days by displeased older people. As we have already seen, there was no question about boys being preferred to girls in most homes, especially if there was only one boy among several girls. In such homes it was the boy who received the presents when the father returned from town, and who was picked up first; it was the boy whom the parents held when they asked to be photographed.

[861] Whipping, which was usually done by the father, was such an effective check on misbehavior that parents often needed only to threaten it. Another method of punishment was to withhold bread from the child for two or three hours, but, as one father said, "This doesn't always work, especially if the child begins to cry."

[357] Some parents, when they were unable to make ends meet, sent a girl off to Sofia to work as a domestic. One family revealed that five years previously a twelve-year-old daughter had been sent to be a servant in Sofia; she would never return to the village to live, nor did she ever come to visit. In this case the parents could not support an extra person, so chose the simplest way out. The fact that many Bulgarian families in cities sought female servants from twelve to eighteen years of age made such a practice possible. Indeed, on St. Dimiter's Day (November 8) and St. George's Day (May 6) there used to be a "servant bazaar" in Sofia. Village girls went to a certain place and stood in a row where housewives could look them over like heifers and choose a maid. Changes in servants, including shepherds, were ordinarily made only at these two times during the year.

593 857 Should parents find a job for a teen-aged boy, the father might require the boy to accept the job. Most boys wanted work; only a few resented working at all. If a father had more sons than he needed on the farm, he sometimes chose a trade for or with the boy. Such